

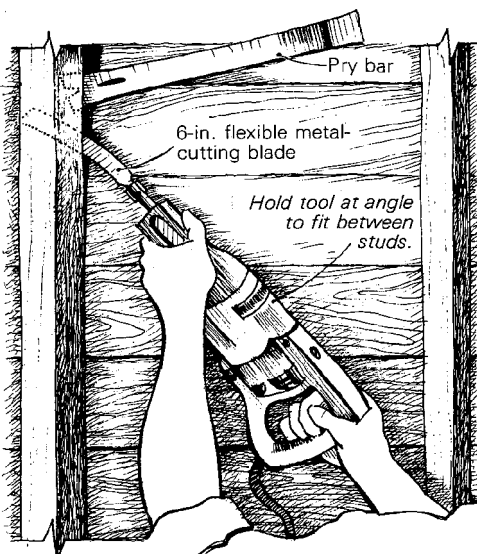
Tips and Techniques is a forum for readers to exchange the methods, tools and jigs they've devised. We'll pay for any we publish. Send details, sketches and negatives with photographs to Tips and Techniques, Fine Homebuilding, Box 355, Newtown, CT 06470.

Save Your Siding

I recently expanded a portion of my house and needed to remove an existing exterior wall. I wanted to match the original siding, so I searched local lumber yards for the same pattern. I eventually found the proper sheathing and was staggered by the price. I realized I was about to remove close to \$300 worth of perfectly good original siding from my house. The problem was how to baby it away from the old studs without rendering it useless. I tried prying, with little success; the brittle old boards cracked and splintered with such regularity that it became obvious another method was essential.

The solution was to cut the nails from the inside with a reciprocal saw mounting a metal-cutting blade. I have Milwaukee Electric Tool Company's Sawzall (13135 W. Lisbon Rd., Brookfield WI 53005), but any make will do. Remove the shoe from the tool so you can angle the blade nearly parallel to the siding. I used 6-in. blades, bent slightly to allow for the difficult angle. I found a little wedging with a pry bar made it easier to insert the blade between the siding and the studs. Be careful to keep the shaft of the saw away from the siding or studs. Contact can result in costly damage to the saw's bearings, gears and the shaft itself.

Be sure to wear safety goggles, because the



blade will occasionally snap during the work. I must have broken \$10 worth, but I sure didn't mind when I had my \$300 worth of siding in usable condition. I figure it paid for the Sawzall, as well. —Hadley Green, Santa Monica, Calif.

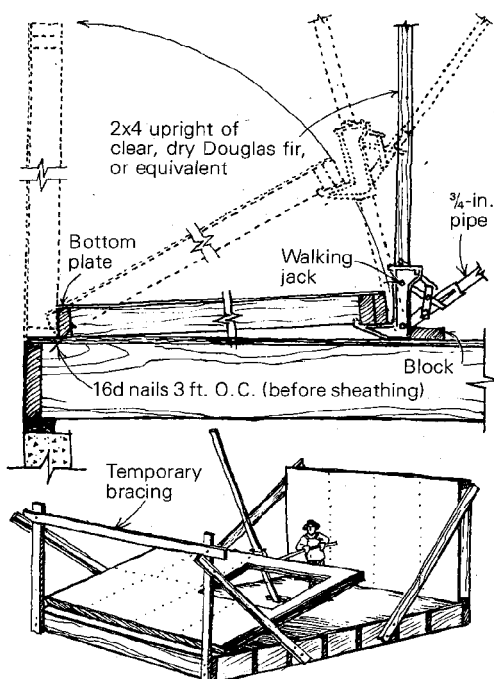
Editor's note: Reciprocal saw manufacturers offer an offset blade adaptor that allows close-quarter sawing without removing the protective shoe; Milwaukee Electric Tool Company offers attachment #48-03-2000.

Raising Walls With Jacks

Your sketch of raising the first bent (see "Solo Timber-Raising" in our first issue) reminded me of a problem I solved when I built my own house.

I borrowed walking jacks from my lumberyard and raised the walls myself. My lumberyard doesn't lend the jacks anymore, but they sell them for \$95. In Portland, they can be rented for about \$8 a day. The jack has a slot that accepts a 2x4 upright and sharp clamps, called *dogs*, which grip the 2x4 to raise the jack when the lever is operated. A 3/4-in. pipe inserted in the jack acts as the lever.

Build the wall section on the floor, but before attaching the exterior sheathing, toenail the bottom plate to the subfloor with 16d nails 3 ft. on center. The nails, bending as the wall is raised, will act as a hinge. Nail a block to the decking behind the upright, so the jack won't slide out of position. Temporary bracing keeps the wall sec-



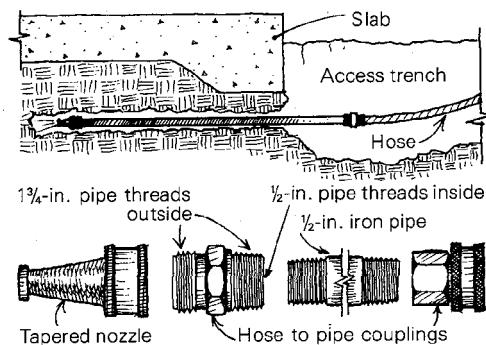
tion from continuing past vertical. I raised 20-ft. sections of wall with one jack and 30-ft. sections using two. The jacks are equally good for lifting heavy beams into place when used with rope pulleys and hoists.

—Walter Holmstrom, Lake Oswego, Ore.

Tunneling Under Slabs

Have you ever needed to bury a water, gas or electric line and found your path blocked by a concrete slab? Here's a hydraulic method for making a small, accurate tunnel under such an obstacle, using a garden hose, iron pipe and about \$5 worth of common brass fittings from your hardware store.

Excavate a trench to the necessary depth, on both sides of the slab, and assemble the pictured fittings. It is important to maintain a level course



under the slab, so be sure your trench is long enough to allow the pipe to remain level while the tunnel is being cut. If access is limited, short sections of pipe may be added with couplings as the tunnel gets longer. Sometimes it is best to work from both sides and meet in the middle.

The tapered nozzle delivers water at a very high velocity and quickly erodes the soil in its path. Adjusting the flow of water will control the diameter of the tunnel.

—Bruce Goodell, Oakland, Calif.